

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Sub B1

1. (Amended) A topical formulation for reducing skin irritation in animals comprising at least 0.5% by weight [about 0.5] to about 10% by weight of the total formulation of [an] aqueous-soluble divalent strontium cation, and a suitable topical formulation vehicle, wherein said topical formulation is packaged with instructions directing the administration of said composition to the skin of an animal subject, and wherein said formulation is effective to prevent or reduce skin irritation at the skin site where the formulation is administered.

FOLLOWING THE CLAIMS:

Please insert an abstract of the invention, which appears on the following separate sheet.

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JULY 1966